



Mackenzie Delta Research Project

MDRP 3

CAI  
IA52

-67P03

*Canada, Northern Science Research  
Group.*

Northern Co-ordination and Research Centre

# The Mackenzie Delta — Domestic Economy of the Native Peoples

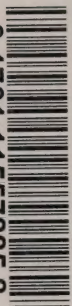
A preliminary study

By D. G. Smith

MDRP 3

Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Ottawa

3 1761 11557885 8




LIBRARY

FEB 23 1968

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO





Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2022 with funding from  
University of Toronto

<https://archive.org/details/31761115578858>

THE MACKENZIE DELTA - DOMESTIC ECONOMY OF THE NATIVE PEOPLES  
A PRELIMINARY STUDY

by

Derek G. Smith

This report is based on research carried out while the author was employed by the Northern Co-ordination and Research Centre. It is reproduced here as a contribution to our knowledge of the North. The opinions expressed however are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Department.

Requests for copies of this report should be addressed to Chief, Northern Co-ordination and Research Centre, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Ottawa.

Northern Co-ordination and Research Centre,  
Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development,  
Ottawa. 1967.

FOREWORD

The Mackenzie Delta Research Project is an attempt to describe and analyze the social and economic factors related to development in the Mackenzie Delta. Particular emphasis is being directed toward the participation of the native people of the area, and the extent to which they are making effective adjustments to changes brought about by government and commercial expansion in the North.

The individual studies within the project and the conclusions arriving from them will be published in a series of reports. This study, MDRP 3, by Derek Smith, was undertaken to provide an outline of subsistence patterns in the Delta, and to provide a preliminary analysis of the problems related to the time-lag between the acquisition of new needs and the means to fulfill them. The report which follows provides a framework for the practical consideration of these problems.

A. J. Kerr,  
Co-ordinator,  
Mackenzie Delta Research Project.



ABSTRACT

This report explores the gap between economic aspirations and realizations for the native people of the Mackenzie Delta. Although these people seldom think abstractly about those attitudes which are related to the attainment of their goals, it was observed that they systematically utilized selected resources, and the author demonstrates that an understanding of this can be gained by analysis framed in a "means-ends" schema, in which attention is paid to what people wish to achieve, what means are available, and what means are selected.

Analysis of the values related to the kinds of means adopted to achieve the goals selected, showed that the people divide into three groups. These are:

- a) People on the land.
- b) Settlement dwellers not in continuous employment.
- c) Settlement dwellers in continuous employment.

Each of these groups is shown to possess different values, and to select different means for goal-achievement. Their response to goal frustrations is examined accordingly. As the younger generation increasingly moves from the land into the settlement, some indication of future trends is noted.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people, including government officials and fellow students, assisted me with this report, both in the field and in ordering my observations. In particular, I am grateful to the staff of the Northern Co-ordination and Research Centre in Ottawa. I also offer my thanks to Dick and Cynthia Hill of Inuvik, Frank Bailey, Richard Bill, Rev. Fr. J. Adam, O.M.I., Dave Sutherland, Miss Jose Mailhot, Miss Jean Briggs, John Wolforth, Dr. W.J. Wright, and Moose Kerr. I remember with gratitude the people of the Mackenzie Delta, especially Owen Allen and Ida, Herbert and Emma Dick, Rhoda Allen, Charlie Allen, Charlie Gordon, Laughing Joe, Fred Joe, Edward Lenny and Victor and Bertha Allen. I stand in great debt to Noel Dick, my Eskimo guide and good companion, who proved invaluable as an introduction to many social situations and did much to help me interpret the ways of the Delta people.

D.G. Smith



TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT		iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS		iv
<u>CHAPTER</u>		
I	THE PROBLEM	1
II	FIELDWORK	2
III	THE THEORETICAL APPROACH	4
IV	THE GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING	8
V	THE MACKENZIE DELTA COMMUNITY	18
VI	RESPONSES TO GOAL FRUSTRATION	29
	1. Lack of Economic Diversity	29
	2. Adjustment to Jobs	41
	3. Educational Opportunities	47
VII	POSSIBLE FUTURE TRENDS	50
VIII	FUTURE RESEARCH	54
	REFERENCES	57
MAP	MACKENZIE DELTA AND ENVIRONS	8A
TABLE	POPULATIONS OF MACKENZIE DELTA SETTLEMENTS - 1965	10





## THE PROBLEM

This study is concerned with a specific problem area in Mackenzie Delta domestic economies, with Aklavik and Inuvik as the main foci of investigation. Its aim is to provide a preliminary analysis of the difference between economic expectation and economic realization among native people in the region. An initial assessment of the mechanisms responsible for fostering new needs and potential frustration related to them is given. A comparison of the role of these factors among settlement dwellers in wage employment, settlement dwellers not in wage employment, and people living on the land, is also included. Further, the relationship of differences in economic need and opportunity to social organization (particularly ethnic and class differences) is explored.

The report is written in part from the point of view of a *theory of action* (cf. Parsons, 1951, 1964). Since it is intended to be read by a number of people other than social scientists, the use of technical terminology is limited. It is hoped that a more formal analyses of selected segments of the data will be presented at a later date.

FIELD WORK

Three months - June, July, and August 1965 - were spent in the field. Inuvik served as base camp, but fairly frequent trips were taken on the Delta to meet people in their own milieu and to observe their activities. On most of these trips Noel Dick, a young Eskimo, served as my guide and companion. We spent the second week of July near Aklavik and visited a number of Delta camps in that area. In the last week of July and the first week of August we made a trip by canoe from Inuvik to Kendall Island to visit the whaling camps located there. On the way we visited a number of fishing camps and spent a day at Reindeer Station. On several occasions I was able to accompany people who had chartered flights out over the Delta and could grasp some idea of the nature of the Mackenzie Delta as a physiographic entity. At the same time I was able to make short visits to Tuktoyaktuk, Herschel Island, Aklavik, and a few camps in the Delta.

In the prosecution of this study, many conversations were held with officials, clergy, and other such people, but direct questioning of native informants was avoided as much as possible. Although ideally such questioning would provide the most answers, it is my conviction that the technique would be unsuitable to the present study. The Delta people resent questions quite strongly, and I gather that a number of them have been bewildered and insulted by social scientists and officials who have aimed direct questions at them. Questions about what people feel the "good life" to be, whether they feel they are getting it, or what they propose to do about frustration in these matters can too easily be construed as challenging the image of what a person feels himself to be. In addition, many of the Delta people do not seem to intellectualize



their position in terms of aspired goals or obtained goals in their economic spheres. Most of them would probably be unable to verbalize their feelings on these matters.

As a check on these impressions, I attempted to formulate carefully a few questions concerning features of the problem and asked them of persons I had come to know fairly well during the summer's work. Their answers were surprisingly superficial and inadequate. In accordance with these impressions (and my own inclination) the field work revolved around an attempt to see as many activities as possible actually taking place and to pitch in and help as far as I could. Long conversations with friends during work and in the tents in the evening provided many useful data.

Three months of field work can supply a great deal of data, but it would be foolish to suggest that the material presented here is anywhere near complete. Accordingly, all the conclusions of this paper are no more than tentative. In an anthropological study an appreciable time must be spent in coming to know people and "learning the ropes" in a society so that the anthropologist can move about in that society causing as little disruption as possible. Furthermore, the nature of the problems set here requires more than a short visit to a society in the summer season. Observation of activities throughout the marked seasons of the northern economic cycle are absolutely necessary. The effects, both fruition and abortion, of decisions made in one season should be traced over time into other seasons and an estimation of the factors which caused these effects must also be made.

### THE THEORETICAL APPROACH

Two factors govern the conceptual schemes underlying any study: (a) the salient or implicit order which the data seem to present, and (b) the nature of the questions on which the data are to bear. In this sense, conceptual formulations are strategies used to bring various kinds of understanding to the data. Some of the methodological commitments underlying this study can be made explicit.

The present study is not concerned with the formulation of generalizations about the way in which societies "work". It is a study of a particular group, and, even more narrowly, of some specific features characterizing the economic life of that group. Its aim is to make explicit the connections or relations between aspects of the physical, social, and cultural life of the native people of the Mackenzie Delta as they were observed in the summer of 1965. The emphasis is on analytical comprehension, on making intelligible the various observed features of the society. In other words, this study attempts an inductive-historical analysis in the way that Evans-Pritchard (1963:49) would define it.

A society may be seen as a system of human actions and interactions. Such a system, in turn, has interchanges, interactions, and relationships with other systems, such as physical environment and ideological or cultural systems. In economic behaviour a social individual performs actions which manipulate the physical and social environment in terms of ideas which he may have about them. Ideas, social actions, and physical environment stand in a functional interrelationship which is capable of study by a number of methods. Here we shall emphasize the nature of social action and attempt to bring strategies to bear upon social actions which will make their relationship with each another and with physical environment and cultural systems intelligible.



Human action has a more or less generalized capacity to cope with varied and diverse environments. In other words, it is adaptive; it emphasizes the multiple uses of commodities. Characteristically, human actions are directed to the attainment of anticipated conditions (i.e. goals). It is conceivable that a system of human actions may more or less passively adapt to environmental conditions, but it is certain that actions constitute varying degrees of control of aspects of the environment. This is the major nexus of our study of economic expectation and realization. We must attempt to see how environment influences human action, how human action deals with exigencies of the environment, and how ideas, aspirations, and expectations relate to these conditions.

In the attempt to achieve expectations - anticipated future conditions - a person must first conceive of the future *state* which he values and wishes to bring about. He must then select and perform the activities compatible with achieving his goal. This is but a crude statement of an exceedingly complex situation. In a multi-faceted environment a person may have a great number of choices of action he can, should, or ought to follow. This process of deciding among choices, "---of assessing them in the light of their ramified consequences--"(Parsons and Shils 1951:11) we can call evaluation. Not only does the *actor* have alternatives in goals, but he has various combinations of means of action that he may use in attempting to gain these goals. He must first recognize his various choices of ends and means and then make some sort of commitment to specific ones among them.

The preceding statements are rooted in the *action theory* classically formulated by Parsons (1951).

Aspirations or expectations, economic or otherwise, concern anticipated future states. These involve values, for they are considered in general terms to be *good, desirable, the right thing, the should, and the ought*. On the basis of these anticipated states (or goals) an actor initiates

action towards achieving them. Such actions are his *means* and they too are involved with values. A means may be seen as available in the first consideration, but it may also be seen as *desirable, suitable, the right thing* in its own right. The reverse of such evaluations is also true, and one may use various combinations of these in achieving a goal.

*Values* and *evaluation* have been defined in very different ways (compare Nadel 1951: 262-265; Ladd 1957: 62-63; Kluckhohn 1956). Belshaw (1959) examines many of the sociological notions of values and finds that although many studies imply values they have not provided a means of describing them, let alone a means for originally identifying them. His interest is basically in those values which are the basis for action. With Nadel, Belshaw (ibid: 555) suggested that values are "ideas about worthwhileness". Nadel suggests that these may be plotted on scales of varying conceptual index ("good - bad", "desired - not desired"), but Belshaw suggests that a better criterion would be observation and at least a crude measurement of the resources, especially time, an individual is prepared to expend in realising certain goals. We do not have sufficient data on the Mackenzie Delta to prosecute a full analysis in terms of the measurement Belshaw suggests. His principle, however, --- that values are ideas of comparative worth by which one controls the expenditure of resources --- is useful. We shall attempt to indicate some of these ideas of worthwhileness upon which the Mackenzie people seem to consistently initiate action.

This means-end schema, however, cannot be considered the whole problem, for each decision-making sequence (for example that of one individual) must exist in an environment of similar sequences being prosecuted by other individuals.



Furthermore, it must exist in relationship to a physical environment of resources, aspects of which may be considered as both means and ends. The sources of disparity between an aspiration and its realization are many. The goal may be unrealistic in the face of available means; means directed to achieving the goal may not be compatible with success; means may be thwarted by the activities of others in pursuit of goals; or the environment may be sufficiently unstable (for all environments undergo change) to cause dislocation of means and ends. That is, as the environment changes, means directed to a goal yet unachieved may become unsuitable; the goal itself may become unrealistic in terms of the means offered by the environment; or new possible means may not be recognized as such in the ideational system. The above schema is an "as if" rational model of action. The two categories of events through which disparity between aspiration and its realization may occur are located in (a) the decision-making sequence of the actor, and (b) fluctuation of the milieu and environment in which the decision-making sequence takes place.

IV

THE GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING AND RESOURCE UTILIZATION

Physical Geography

Mackay (1963) has described the physical geography of the Mackenzie Delta. For our present purposes, the Delta can be rather clearly defined as a physiographic entity. In gross terms, it is approximately rectangular - 150 miles long and 50 miles wide - and lies on a northwest-southeast axis. To the south, the Delta is bounded by the height of land between the Peel and Mackenzie Rivers. There they both enter the alluvial flats which constitute the major part of the Delta; after flowing through these, they empty into the Beaufort Sea, which lies at the northern edge of the Delta. On the west, the Delta is bounded by the Richardson Mountains and, on the east, by the Caribou Hills and open tundra.

Three main channels extending along the axis of the Delta dissect its alluvium. Cross channels cut the Delta into many islands, the largest of which is Richards Island in the northeast. Mudbanks on the channels vary from about ten feet above low water in the south to a few inches or a foot in the north. Numerous lakes cover the islands, and the northwestern sector of the Delta contains much marshy ground. The tree line runs across the northern part of the Delta, with spruce growing fairly plentifully in its southern half. The entire area is underlain by hundreds of feet of permafrost, which, when undisturbed, thaws to a depth of only a few inches during the short summer.

Mackay (1963: 153-155) and Cooper (1967: 6-11) describe the climate of the Delta. This is typically arctic, with short warm summers and long winters. Total precipitation is low - 5 to 12 inches per year - though fogs are common in summer, especially along the coast. Freeze-up occurs in October and break-up in May, allowing travel by water from June through September. Travel over frozen ground and ice marks the greater portion of the year.



SCALE: 1" = 22 Statute Miles

FROM: Peel & Firth River ICAO Charts

Statute Miles 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100

FROM: Peel & Firth River ICAO Charts

FROM: Peel & Firth River ICAO Charts

Statute Miles 10 100 200 300 400

Statute Miles 10 100 200 300 400





## Population

Originally (Mooney 1928) there were approximately 22,500 Canadian and Labrador Eskimos; this number appears to have declined to about 8,000 by 1928. Jenness (1960: 422) estimated that in 1929 only 800 Eskimos lived between the Alaska-Canada Boundary and Cape Bathurst, of whom a mere dozen were really native to that district; when Sir John Franklin explored the same area in 1826, an estimated 2,000 Eskimos lived there. Jenness states that most of the 800 Eskimos between the Alaskan boundary and Cape Bathurst had moved east from Alaska to occupy the territory of the indigenous Eskimos who had been decimated by disease. Many of the Eskimos I met in the Mackenzie Delta claimed either an Alaskan heritage or had actually moved into the Delta from Alaska within the last forty years. Some of them still return to the Point Barrow region to visit relatives and friends. Others claim a *Kugmallit* heritage (Coppermine, etc.) and likewise have relatives and friends in that area. These two Eskimo groups speak different dialects, but though they are very conscious of their differences in language, they converse easily and freely. At present, the Eskimos are largely confined to the region extending from Aklavik and Inuvik to the Beaufort Sea.

The Indians (mostly Loucheux Athabaskan) seem to have been moving into the Delta from the south to occupy it more consistently than in the past, although originally the Loucheux appear to have ventured onto the barrens in winter for caribou while the Eskimos were sealing on the coast. Jenness (1960: 399) states that Loucheux territory extended to the point where the Peel River enters the Mackenzie Delta. Apparently a few bands of Hare Indians periodically used the Anderson River drainage (Osgood 1932). At present the Loucheux extend into the Delta as far as Aklavik and Inuvik.

Many of the Eskimo have European elements in their ancestry and a few show quite conspicuous Melanesian characteristics, which are acknowledged to be the result of intermarriage with crewmen of the early whaling fleets. Likewise, many of the Loucheux have Scots and French Ancestry.

The population of the Mackenzie Delta in 1965 is shown in Table I.

Table I

Populations of Mackenzie Delta Settlements - 1965

	<u>White</u>	<u>Metis</u>	<u>Eskimo</u>	<u>Indian</u>	<u>Total</u>
Inuvik*	1367	-	646	245	2290
Hostels	(102)	-	(270)	(114)	(486)
Aklavik	105	134	277	158	674
Reindeer Station	9	-	60	-	69
Fort McPherson	29	158	12	315	514
Arctic Red River	5	21	-	83	110
			Total		3657

\*Including children in hostels, but excluding single men in Navy barracks. (Source: Department of Northern Affairs files, Inuvik)

While the categories *Eskimo* and *Indian* refer mainly to linguistic characteristics, they are also legal definitions in modern administration. My observations, however, support the view that in many respects these terms have very limited meaning. In the Mackenzie Delta today, there is very little ethnic specialization of economic activities among people on the land. To be sure, the Indians depend somewhat more on fresh and dried fish than do the Eskimos, while the latter still hunt seals and whales. Also, there are no Indian reindeer herders. But beyond these differences, the Mackenzie Delta economic activities are remarkably uniform. Undoubtedly the Loucheux technique for drying fish was taken over by Eskimos moving into the Delta, and today a few Indians have a taste for whale products and seals. In general, the people of the Mackenzie do many things in the same way to make a living. My Eskimo informants often



assured me that the Indians were "just like us". In moments of anger, ethnic lines will crystallize momentarily, but for the most part they appear unimportant, at least in the economic sense. Therefore, when I refer to the *Mackenzie Delta people* in the rest of this report, I mean all the native-born people of the area, including the few White trappers, who are remarkably similar in their economic ways to the Eskimos and the Indians.

Although ethnic relations in the Mackenzie Delta are smooth in general, the Indian peoples resent what they interpret as a bias of government in favour of the Eskimos. For example, the Indians at Arctic Red River resent the fact that they have been petitioning Indian Affairs for several years for an ice-house without success. These people catch a large amount of fish annually and depend on a fish diet more than some other Delta groups. In addition, they want the ice-house to chill and freeze the fish for market consumption so that they can earn some extra cash. Their resentment is doubled when they hear that in recent years Northern Affairs has built two ice-houses at Kendall Island for the relatively small number of people who still go whaling.

#### An Economic Calendar for People Living off the Land

Originally all the population of the Mackenzie Delta lived on the land. Many still do, and this way of life underlies and shapes the whole Delta society. The economic activities of the people who are largely or partially dependent on products of the land are therefore important. The following is an outline of these activities by season.

January - February - March: a period of little activity. The weather is cold and there is a minimum of daylight. Wood is cut for fuel as needed, although some may have been cut and stockpiled in the autumn. Fish - (loche and pike) - may be jigged through holes in the ice. Rabbits and fox are trapped near the coast.

April - May: by the middle or end of April preparations are made up trapping muskrat. Trapping usually does not begin until the air temperature is sufficiently high that traps set in muskrat push-ups<sup>1</sup> will not freeze solid. A cold season means delay of trapping and a shorter period of trapping within the legal season.

May - June: after ice in the lakes and streams has begun to break up, and within the month legally set aside, muskrats are shot. Usually two men work together using a small canoe which can be pushed from lake to lake over the snow. After the muskrat shooting season ends in June, trappers move to the settlements to finish cashing in their pelts when there is a period of about two weeks of inactivity before families begin to move out to the fishing camps on the Delta. At this time, many men attempt to find casual wage employment.

July - August - September: fishing camps are in full swing. The catch is largely whitefish and inconnu, which are used both for human consumption and dog food. Eskimos who go to the coast for whales (mid-July to mid-August) return to the Delta to fish until freeze-up. During the summer caribou may be shot when available, but the major caribou hunt is in September. Berries are picked in late August.

October - November: houses are patched up and made ready for winter. After the ice on the river is solid (usually mid-October) pike and loche are jigged. Eighty or more fish per day have been taken in this way. The fish are stored outdoors where they will remain frozen. Blocks of ice for household use are cut from the streams. Some men trap for mink (proceeds from mink trapping provide a grub-stake for the muskrat season). Seals are taken in open leads at the coast. Just after freeze-up small parties of men travel up into the Richardson Mountains to an open stream to "sweep" for char with a net.

---

1. Feeding places, built up during freeze-up from grasses, etc.



December: some fish may be jigged until the weather becomes too cold.

### Land Resources

On the basis of the above outline, we can describe in more detail the major resource areas utilized at present in the Delta.

Caribou: Caribou migrate through the Richardson Mountains to the west of the Delta. In summer - usually in late June and early July - they move north through these mountains toward the coast, then, in late August and September, they return south. This is the main hunting season. Afterward, the meat is brought down in packs on dogs' backs, on toboggans, if there is sufficient snow, or by airplane. Black Mountain and Red Mountain directly west of Aklavik are said to be good hunting areas, particularly in September and October, but a steep climb with dogs and toboggans is necessary.

Fish: Gill nets for whitefish and inconnu are set in smaller channels in the southern half of the Delta. Most frequently small groups of relatives or friends set up summer camps and share the produce of their labours. About three or four thousand fish are required each year by a family and its dog team. Dried fish from summer are kept for human consumption. Fish not selected for drying in the summer are sometimes deposited in shallow pits in the permafrost and are used for dog food during the winter.

Fishing for whitefish is not common north of the tree line in the Delta, although they would undoubtedly be available there.

Some Arctic char (locally called trout) are taken in the southern part of the Delta in late August and September. Char are also netted in mid-August along the coast between Herschel Island and Shingle Point, but these are taken in small quantities as a luxury food. They are cut and dried, with light smoking, in the same way as whitefish. In late August some people from Inuvik make short two-or-three-day trips to Whitefish Station and Kugmallit Bay on the east side

of the Delta to catch and dry "trout". The most important catch, however, takes place after freeze-up at a place called "Fish-hole" on a stream in the mountains north and west of Aklavik which remains open well after freeze-up. Here the "trout" are taken with short nets dragged through the water by two men. These fish are frozen on the stream bank before being stacked on toboggans for the trip downhill to Aklavik. Small groups of relatives or friends (usually only men) perform this activity, and the catch is shared equally. This is considered exciting and perhaps dangerous work, for toboggans occasionally "run away" on the downhill trip.

Loche and pike are jigged through the ice in early winter. These are a very important source of winter dog food. People generally do not eat these fish, except for loche livers, which are considered a great delicacy for their oils and rich taste. The fish are frozen and then kept outdoors on raised stagings out of reach of predators and dogs.

Whales: The season for beluga or white whale is short, extending from mid-July to mid-August. They are taken at three localities on the northern edge of the Delta; these are:

(a) Shingle Point. A few families make a temporary summer camp at the shallow harbour at Shingle Point. In 1965 about 15 mature beluga were taken there.

(b) Kendall Island (Okivik - "place where we spend the winter.")

Two temporary camps are located on Kendall Island. The "old camp" is on a sheltered lagoon on the west side of the island and was once a permanent settlement with a trading post. The two large log houses there have now collapsed and are being used as fire wood by temporary campers. In 1963, the temporary camp consisted of six tents housing two extended families. An old Peterhead boat built in 1924 was used by the camp. Six belugas were shot and harpooned (none netted) and processed for blubber, muktuk, and fried meat. The skin of one whale was also prepared for making soles for shoes. Offal was fed to the dogs.

The "new camp", at the lagoon on the eastern side of the island, also consisted of two families. One of these families had a small whaling "schooner" in good condition, while the other family had a 26 foot open boat on loan from the Department of Northern Affairs. These two family heads are aggressive hunters. They took 12 whales (9 adult whales by shooting and harpooning, 3 juvenile whales by netting), which were all processed into blubber, muktuk, and dried meat.

(c) Kidluit Bay: A small camp is set up every year at Kidluit Bay by the Reindeer Project to get whales for dog food and muktuk. To my knowledge two whales were taken and processed in 1965.

At present, whaling is not central to the economy of the Mackenzie Delta. Only a few families are directly engaged in it, although many relatives and friends of these families receive portions of whale meat and muktuk.

Whaling and sealing are still basically Eskimo activities, but some Indians consider whales most acceptable food. In 1965 when one Indian family teamed up with an Eskimo family to go whaling, they took five whales. It should also be mentioned that several widows and old hunters were given shares of this catch of whales, so that from the work of two men, one woman and her children, about fifteen people had appreciable amounts of whale products.

Seals: People from the Delta have only one major sealing area. This area is the stretch of coast between Shoalwater Bay and a point about ten miles north of Malcolm River. The main camp is at Herschel Island, although temporary sealing camps are located at Ptarmigan Point (on the mainland directly west of Herschel Island) and at a shallow harbour near Shingle Point.

In the summer of 1964 the permanent camp at Herschel Island had 10 adult hunters, and 4 adult hunters in the 1964-1965 winter season. A total of 855 seals were taken in the summer and winter of 1964 and early 1965, mostly by netting.<sup>1</sup>

---

1. Data furnished by W.Hill, Industrial Division, Dept. of Northern Affairs, Inuvik.



Seals also were harpooned and shot in open leads or were shot while basking on the ice edge. One technique involves shooting at the head of a swimming seal with a 12 gauge shotgun. This blinds the seal, which then swims in circles until it can be secured by a harpoon or seal hook.

Fowl: Geese and ducks and brant are used extensively and are valued for relieving the monotony of a whale and fish diet.

Berries: In August, people in fish camps set out to pick berries. The main berrying areas are around Reindeer Station, around Shingle Point, and on the fringes of the Richardson Mountains near Aklavik. Cranberries are boiled into a jam for use in the winter. Some are eaten boiled fresh and thickened with custard powder as a welcome late summer dessert. Otherwise berries are eaten fresh with tinned milk and sugar or are preserved in blubber for winter use.

Trapping: Muskrat, mink, and beaver are trapped mostly in the southern end of the delta. The northern limit of concentrated trapping is roughly on a line drawn east-west through Reindeer Station. The trapping areas presently in use tend to be clustered in the Inuvik-Aklavik area. Some persons set traps for muskrat while the push-ups are still frozen, but a man found doing so is censured by his peers. Small groups of relatives or close friends share trapping camps. Mink are trapped in channels through the delta, as are occasional beaver. A few men from Aklavik and Inuvik hunt marten in the Anderson River drainage area.

A few lynx and arctic fox are taken by Delta men, but these do not loom large in the economy at present. The "staple fur" of the Mackenzie Delta is the muskrat.

This description indicates the nature of the Delta in human terms and relates the activities of Delta people to geography and resources. It is apparent that the resource utilization area

is not coincident with the geographical delta. Data to be presented in the next section will show that a defineable group of people use the resource areas discussed above. These data will indicate that there is a definite territory within which the Delta people must manipulate the resources (both physical and human) in the process of making a living.

## The Mackenzie Delta Community

### The Dimensions of the Community

The people of the Mackenzie Delta constitute a *community* in the sociological sense of a face-to-face norm-sustaining unit; they can be seen as a group of people in reasonably close contact with one another who look to each other for positive and negative sanctions to their actions and who possess a common solidarity vis-a-vis other groups similarly defined. Sheer propinquity of living does not necessarily produce this community of sentiment. The component members of a community have more social characteristics in common with one another than with any other group.<sup>1</sup> I consider the sociological community in the Mackenzie Delta to be coincident with the boundaries of the resource utilization area I have described above.

Although Kugmallit Bay is part of the physiographic area of the Mackenzie Delta, it is not generally used by Delta people in resource utilization. Whales in considerable number are taken in Kugmallit Bay, near Hendrickson Island, but the hunters come almost exclusively from Tuktoyaktuk. Temporary sealing camps are located in Kugmallit Bay and at the south end of Liverpool Bay, but again these camps are manned by people from Tuktoyaktuk.

The core settlements of the Mackenzie Delta Community are Inuvik, Aklavik, Reindeer Station, and Fort McPherson. Arctic Red River appears to be marginal, and Tuktoyaktuk to belong to another area. The Delta settlements are

---

1. Suttles (1963) and Chang (1962) have emphasised the sociological definition of *community* in terms similar to those which I use here.



communities more in the legal than in the sociological sense. These settlements can be seen as foci within the larger structure of the community of the Delta. The particular nature of the social bonds (both friendship and kinship) are very important in organization for production and consumption within the Delta community as here defined. This will become clear through the following discussion.

After gaining the impression that the Delta constituted a community, I sought ways of testing this idea. The first was to establish from my own observation the range of people with whom persons of my acquaintance maintained contact and the nature of the contact so maintained. Many people in the Delta know of others by name, although they may never have met them. They also frequently know a surprising amount about the activities of these people by a most efficient "grape-vine". The closeness of the Delta people was made clear to me during my trips around the Delta by canoe where we seldom passed a camp without dropping in to drink tea and smoke cigarettes with the people of that camp. There was generally much exchange of news and gossip on these occasions. My guide was able to tell me, practically without exception, what persons were likely to be in which camps doing certain things at certain times.

Most of the Indians and Metis in Aklavik have kinship ties with Fort McPherson and frequent visits take place between relatives of the two settlements. A great number of native persons in Inuvik have relatives and friends in Aklavik, as would be expected from the history of the move in recent years of people from Aklavik to Inuvik. The herders at Reindeer Station have close ties with Aklavik and Inuvik Eskimos. People from Arctic Red River come to Inuvik for trading and business, and some of them have relatives there, but the greatest ties of Arctic Red River seem to be with upstream settlements.

People in Inuvik have kinship and friendship ties with Tuktoyaktuk and Sachs Harbour. However, since both Tuktoyaktuk and Sachs Harbour belong to a different resource utilization area, there is evidence of some negative sentiment between the people of the Delta and those of Tuktoyaktuk, as well as between those of Arctic Red River and the Delta.

For example, I was told that in September 1964 a group from Inuvik went to Tuktoyaktuk to fish for herring. When they arrived in Tuktoyaktuk and made their purpose known, the people of Tuktoyaktuk became belligerent and told them to leave. The Inuvik people left without a single fish. Near the beginning of the muskrat season in 1965 a trapper from Tuktoyaktuk came into the Delta and camped near Inuvik to trap muskrat. The Inuvik people became incensed at this and the matter was brought before the Delta trappers' council; the trapper from Tuktoyaktuk was forced to leave. In August, 1965, while I was exchanging gossip with a group of Delta people, one of them announced that a fox trapping licence had been issued to certain men in Tuktoyaktuk to allow them to run a trap-line for foxes across the islands at the mouth of the Delta. At this, the discussion became heated and all those present pledged to fight the Tuktoyaktuk permit. I was told that "the Tuk people are just damn fish-heads. They're always trying to get ahead of us, but we're not going to let them. The least they could do is be honest."<sup>1</sup> On another occasion I was told of an incident between a hunting party from Aklavik and the people of Arctic Red River. Apparently the Aklavik hunters had been hunting moose not far north of Point Separation, had taken one, and were making camp in order to clean and butcher it. Just then, a man from Arctic Red River came by and stopped to drink tea with the Aklavik hunters. When he left, he went straight to the R.C.M. Police in Arctic Red River and complained

---

1. "To be honest" means "to play fair" in the idiolect of the Mackenzie Delta people.

about the activities of the Aklavik people. Feelings still run high over the incident.

After beginning to realize the importance of these events, I started asking people informally about the settlements they had visited. Very few had been to either Tuktoyaktuk or Arctic Red River, although considerably more reported visits (usually fairly long, a week or more) to Fort McPherson and Reindeer Station and nearly everyone had been to Aklavik and Inuvik. Only a few had visited Fort Franklin, Fort Good Hope, Old Crow, or Barter Island.

### Community Composition

In the Canadian northland, society is complex. The anthropologist may describe a segment of that society (e.g. Mackenzie District Eskimos, or Yukon Metis), but if he limits himself entirely to this, he ignores a major part of the social milieu in which the Eskimo or Metis must now live. I refer to the powerful role of the "whites".

Throughout our study we must keep this important point in mind. If we are to understand the actions of the native people of the Delta, we must see these actions as occurring in a total social milieu which includes the whites. They are an important determining aspect of the alternatives presented to the native. As much as we must understand the actions and frustrations of native people, we must also understand the actions and frustrations of the latter group.

This point is basic to the division of the native Mackenzie society, which can be grouped into three segments: (a) people on the land, (b) settlement-dwellers not in continuous wage-employment (c) settlement-dwellers with continuous wage-employment. A description of these three segments follows.

### People on the land

In the Mackenzie Delta there can be observed a group of people who are virtually identical to the group Vallee (1962: p. 134) referred to as "Nunamiut" (people of the land) in Central Keewatin. I shall not use the term Nunamiut here, however, because it is an Eskimo word and I wish to refer to



the multiple society of the Mackenzie Delta. Vallee (ibid.) describes the Nunamiut as those who:

1. reveal a desire to live on the land rather than in the settlement;
2. choose a way of life which requires an acute dependence on the land;
3. choose to follow what traditional conventions still exist in the culture, such as in living arrangements, and habits, in the ways they bring up their children - in short, those who appear to be oriented more to the traditional way of life than the Kabloona (white mans) way of life

The exact number of people on the land in the Mackenzie Delta is not certain. An estimate might be that about 150 persons make a living in this way, of whom possibly 30 are adult male hunters. This group depends on the land for virtually all its fish, berries, and meat (some tinned meats and bacon are bought for use while travelling). Tea, sugar, flour, macaroni, spaghetti, and rice, are the main store foods used. Flour is used to make bannock and bread and to thicken meat stocks. Rice and macaroni are used in soups and stews of wild food, for nearly all fish and meat is cooked by boiling. People of Eskimo ancestry also eat frozen fish, caribou, seal, and whale products raw.

Several people on the land explicitly expressed a desire to stay on the land and to stay away from the settlements as much as possible. This was usually rationalized as a wish to avoid the drunkenness, rowdyism, and fighting of the settlements. People on the land are inclined to say that they are much better fed than those in the settlements. They value their wild food diet of meat and rich fats. A highly successful hunter told me that "in town your grub would be mostly bannock and tea and fish. You can't live good on that".

Most of the people on the land are able to speak English, while a few are able to read and write. Amongst themselves, however, they speak native languages with an almost complete exclusion of English. Most wish their children to continue in the native ways as hunters and fishers. Here is a major

source of conflict. One hunter whom I knew very well complained to me often that his son was not a good hunter, and that he could not learn his way about the delta. The hunter blamed this on schooling -- "if you have been to school you're no good in the Delta". This group attempts to teach their sons how to be good hunters and fishers and their daughters to be good cooks, seamstresses, and housekeepers.

In hunting and fishing, rifles, nylon nets, and other European devices are used, but great respect accrues to the man who can still make and use harpoons, and bone seal or fish hooks. My guide said of such a man "he sure knows lots; he knows how to live".

Amongst the people on the land, organization for productive activities is frequently on kinship lines. Two brothers, or father and sons, may hunt, trap, and fish together. Whaling and sealing camps are basically constituted on kin ties with no marked preference for either patrilineal or matrilineal groupings. Kin groups also go berrying together. If a man's kin have wage employment, he performs economic activities on the land with close friends. Some of the Eskimos (especially those recently from Alaska) still maintain partner relationships, which are close and dependent relationships between two men.

The land oriented group retains close ties with the settlement-dwellers, but is on the whole a little distrustful of the white man. On several occasions when I was visiting people of this group there was anxiety and tension that I might not eat their food. When I did eat what was presented, there was general relief. I mentioned this to a friend who told me the people "were scared I would say their grub had gone stink". This recalls the important parameter of commensality in class and caste definition.

People on the land cannot live merely by meat, fish, and berries. They need store clothing, tents, rifles, sewing machines, canoes and outboard motors, ammunition, pots and pans,

tools, traps, and staple starch foods. These require cash, which is supplied mainly by trapping, by family allowance cheques, and by old-age pension cheques received by elderly people in the household.

I calculated at the end of the summer, after having seen the people in operation, that a man with a wife, two children and an elderly dependent requires \$800.00 to \$1,000.00 per year to fulfill their wants. If earnings from trapping and other cash sources fall below this amount, the deficit is made up by welfare payments. With few exceptions the people try to get as much by way of welfare as they can.

#### Settlement-Dwellers Not in Continuous Wage-Employment

As an opposite to Nunamiut Vallee (1962: 134) isolated a group which he called the "Kabloonamiut" (people of the white man). These were described as people who:

1. reveal a desire to live in the settlement;
2. reject a way of life which requires an acute dependence on the land;
3. choose to follow certain Kabloona-like customs where they could just as well follow traditional ones.

A large group with these characteristics is to be found in the Mackenzie Delta, but again here I shall eschew the term Kabloonamiut because of its Eskimo reference. The corresponding Mackenzie Delta group is both of Indian and Eskimo ethnic origin. I have found that members of this group are not points distributed over a continuum, but that it is useful to divide them into two groups, each with their own social characters. These can be best described as "settlement-dwellers not in continuous wage-employment" and "settlement-dwellers in continuous wage-employment"; for convenience, I shall often abbreviate these terms to "casual wage-earners" and "steady wage-earners".

Settlement dwellers without continuous wage-employment probably constitute the largest group of Mackenzie Delta people. This group tends to live in single nuclear family



dwellings. In general, the household unit is dependent solely on the productive capacities of the husband/father. In summer, he either has casual employment or is looking for such a job. He is usually a day-labourer; his actual work may vary from season to season - for example, he may be a brush-cutter one year and a carpenter's helper the next. Men who have casual jobs in the summer trap for mink in the autumn and muskrat in the spring.

Although this group of people chooses to live in the settlements, its members depend to a certain extent on the land for protein foods, mainly caribou and fish (although some appreciate whale products received as gifts from relatives and close friends). In the summer months, the wife and children may set up a fish camp and will pick berries in season for winter use. A considerable number of fish are required, not only for the people, but also for the dogs which are used in winter for travelling to trapping camps.

When possible, however, members of this group tend to reject ethnic food. Most of those with Eskimo ancestry now reject seal oil and blubber "because it makes you stink". Some even reject dried fish. As far as my knowledge goes, very few will eat frozen meat or fish raw.

Most of these settlement dwellers speak English among themselves, and have had a few years of schooling. They seem to favour settlement living, with the implicit aspiration of becoming more like the "white man". Their relationship with Euro-Canadians is, on the whole, smooth, except that quite a number of them have come up against the police on various occasions. There is a general resentment towards officials in their capacities.

Many of these people say that living on the land is "too rough" and entails too much risk. Some of the young men are locally described as "young punks", most of whom have

never really lived on the land. Nearly every one to whom I spoke praised the man who could live on the land, but when asked why he did not attempt it himself confessed that he could not. They equally esteem the man who can keep a steady job. In their ways they are not unlike their counterparts in the rest of Canada - black leather jackets, jet boots, and bizarre haircuts all occur in the Delta, as well as fantastic hopes of "striking it rich" with minimal effort.

The group of settlement dwellers without continuous wage-employment is by no means homogeneous. This is obvious on a material level: some live in the "shack-town" on the western fringe of Inuvik; others live in 512's<sup>1</sup> and have chesterfields, chromium kitchen suites, and even rugs on the floor. There is also a distinction on the sociological level. This group, I think, should not simply be considered as being in a transitional stage between people on the land and settlement-dwellers with predominantly white (i.e. Southern Canadian) tastes. Many, of course, are in this stage, but some seem to have struck a convenient balance between the exigencies of both settlement and land living. In a few cases the husband/father will have casual jobs throughout the year, and the wife may be the active fisher and dog-team owner and will actually go out on the land to hunt caribou. We shall return to the distinction between these sub-groups later, and we shall see that there is the possibility of the emergence of a *class* of settlement-dwellers relying both on the land and the supplies of the Hudson's Bay Company.

In comparison with the people who live on the land, these casual wage-earners require considerably more cash. In Inuvik, members of this group use fuel oil for heating, while people on the land use wood. Those who live

---

1. Small houses originally, of 512 square feet floor area, later modified to be slightly larger. They were originally built by the Department, but many have been sold to local people.

"512" houses require cash for rent. Since they rely on wild food less than people on the land, they rely on store food more. The rejection of certain ethnic foods further complicates matters and forces a greater use of store foods beyond simple staples. Beef, pork, bacon, tinned vegetables and fruits, tinned meats and fancy baked goods are valued. Instead of baking bread, many people depend on bakery products. Butter and jam are considered essential, and only in emergencies will lard or animal grease be used as a substitute for butter.

It is not easy to estimate, even roughly, the amount of cash required annually by a family of a husband, wife, and three or four children in this group. \$1,500 to \$2,000 might suffice, but most would probably require something in the neighbourhood of \$3,000 or more.

#### Settlement-Dwellers in Continuous Wage-Employment

Settlement-dwellers with steady jobs form a reasonably distinctive group in the Mackenzie Delta. In many ways this group is similar to that of men with only casual jobs, but its aspirations are not identical. Members of this group are more truly Kabloonamiut in Vallee's sense. The husband/father is continuously occupied with his job, so that he is unable to hunt or fish apart from occasional holiday weekends and summer vacations. Some men fish in the evenings to supply their table and dogs (which are usually considered to belong to their sons) but the major source of food is the Hudson's Bay Company where the full range of consumer goods is utilized. In one home I was served on two occasions with Italian pizza as a snack; this was brought frozen at the Hudson's Bay Company. Wild food is much appreciated as a diet supplement. Whale products and dried fish are often received from relatives still hunting. The men often shoot caribou for themselves and some visit fishing and whaling camps of relatives for a break from the settlement routine.

Most people with steady jobs have more ornate and more consciously modern Canadian furnishings in their



homes. Many live in "512's" and may have chesterfields, chromium kitchen suites, large refrigerators and deep-freezers, floor rugs, wall pictures, china ornaments, and so on. Members of the Innuvit Housing Co-operative in Inuvik have dwellings not unlike those found in suburban Edmonton or Vancouver. These houses have picture windows, built-in refrigerators and cooking ranges, bedroom suites in the multiple bedrooms, tiled floors, and central oil heating. A very few steady wage-earners have automobiles, which are a true sign of affluence. Others demonstrate their affluence by maintaining expensive speed boats with large outboard engines.

Relations of this group with the white Canadians are smooth, since they work closely with them in their jobs. In general, this group would seem to have a strong social consciousness and members are often politically active in the community. Members of the Innuvit Housing Co-operative are almost entirely Eskimo in ancestry, still speak their language and are proud of their Eskimo origin. Some work actively to maintain their Eskimo identity in language, singing, and dancing, but "outside" clothing and the English language are used far more frequently.

Since the group of steady wage-earners is not entirely homogeneous, it is somewhat difficult to make an estimate of their annual cash requirement. I estimated an absolute minimum of \$4,000 for a man, wife, and three or four children. I discussed this matter with a member of the group, and he suggested that \$4,500 was a more realistic minimum.

### RESPONSES TO GOAL FRUSTRATION

At the outset of this paper it was stated that one of our major considerations was to be the nature of the frustrations deriving from the distance between aspired goals and obtained goals (p. 3) in economic spheres. The latter, as pointed out in Chapter III, will be affected by various factors; viz., 1.) realistic goals within environmental limitations; 2) the activities of others in pursuit of similar goals; and 3) the means available in achieving the goals. These will be discussed below in terms of 1.) the lack of economic diversity, 2.) adjustment to jobs, and 3.) educational opportunities.

#### 1. Lack of Economic Diversity

Chance (1963: 264), Clairmont (1963: v-vii, 24), Hobart (1965), and Hughes (1965) have suggested that various segments of northern people experience a marked "gap" between aspirations and the legitimate means of realising these aspirations. These writers, and others (e.g. Rousseliere 1964; Schaeffer 1964), have emphasized the role of this gap in terms of stress, *conflict*, *deviance*, and *psychopathology*. The present paper is not so much concerned with such phenomena as with the interactive role of the physical environment, social milieu, and values of individuals in producing and perpetuating this gap.

Disparity between economic realization and expectation is "as old as man himself" and to an extent such disparity occurs in all societies. The important aspect of such disparity is its relationship in unique concatenations in specific groups, at specific times, in specific places. We must emphasize

the whole social milieu, and its *physical* and *mental* environments. As we have pointed out earlier, disparity between aspiration and realization may occur as the result of fluctuation in the milieu and environment in which the actor is situated.

Fluctuation in the environment of the Mackenzie Delta crucially affects the people of the land and the settlement dwellers who depend on wild food. Caribou are unpredictable in their number and migration patterns. Fish are not always available in great numbers, and apparently the availability of whales may vary quite markedly over the years. But perhaps as important are fluctuations in the availability of the major cash crop - furs - of which muskrat are most important.

Also, other unpredictable natural events can cause hardship. For example, during the past winter two trappers were hunting near the coast on the eastern edge of the delta; while they were sleeping, a patch of ice in the channel broke, water welled through and over the ice, and their sled with a large load of skins was practically a total loss.

But it would be wrong to suggest that environmental fluctuations are the most important factors. It is not so much what an environment does to a human group as what the group does with the environment that should be our major concern here. In this context, environmental fluctuations may be viewed as one of the causes of two key sociological principles operative among the Mackenzie Delta people. These can be briefly described as: 1) an egalitarian ethic and 2) a maximization of immediate gains.

The first principle can easily be observed among the people on the land. If one family has committed itself to the exploitation of a certain resource which fails on some occasion, that family will not suffer unduly; other families which have food will see that the family has a share.<sup>1</sup>

---

1. In the present-day society, if this fails, the family has recourse to Social Assistance ("relief").



Families tend to travel together year after year and form a unit of people organized for production and use of certain food (but not cash-earning) resources (i.e. whales, seals, caribou, fish). Members of the families concerned form a relatively efficient team, each member with specialized duties. As an example, one of the whaling camps in the summer of 1964 consisted of one nuclear and one extended family. The nuclear family consisted of one elderly widow (who owned a whaling schooner, inherited from her husband), her daughter (19 yrs. old), and son (20 yrs. old). The extended family consisted of an elderly whaler (71 yrs. old) with his wife and four sons (24, 20, 19, and 10 yrs. old) and one daughter (9 yrs. old). The twenty-four year old son had his wife and their infant son in camp. The five men over eighteen years old formed a whaling team (captain, pilot, engineer, and two harpooners) using the widow's boat. The boat was captained by the elderly head of the extended family. The women of both families dressed and prepared the whales. Younger sons fished, hunted geese and scavenged wood for fuel. They and the young girls fed the dogs. Every meal in camp was prepared and eaten together in one huge tent, with both families contributing equally. At the end of the whaling season the total whale products were divided exactly in half -- on half to the nuclear family, one half to the extended family.

Likewise, two or three friends will hunt caribou together using the boat of one of the men. All will contribute equal amounts of gasoline, ammunition, and food. At the end of the hunt the catch is divided equally between all participants, even if one man has not actually shot one of the caribou or if one man has shot them all. The ethic is strictly egalitarian in these instances. That one man should have a lot and the others less, is unthinkable. Prestige lies not in possession and accumulation but in being an aggressive and successful hunter. That any family on the land would want for wild food, if wild food were available among their peers, would be unlikely.

The second principle was evident in many activities I observed in the Mackenzie Delta, and may be stated: "maximize immediate profits, gratifications, and gains". But with this immediate maximization there seems to be few actions specifically taken to minimize immediate or potential risk or cost. Good examples of this are the attitudes casual wage-earners in the settlements have towards jobs, as well as gambling, immoderate drinking, and attitudes to education. Anticipated future states are generally very short-range and pragmatic. Social factors can also constitute a drain on means which could have been directed to the achievement of an individual's specific goals. The Delta people are often characterized as improvident and lacking in foresight, polemic terms which obscure understanding. The short-range decision-making of at least the people on the land and the settlement-dwellers without steady jobs should be seen in relation to an unstable environment and rapidly changing social milieu, both of which could too easily make long-range decision-making an act of folly rather than wisdom. In a certain sense, this represents a kind of adaptation to the environment.

#### The Response of People Living on the Land

In the light of these two principles, and considering the general environment, we can distinguish several ways in which goal frustration occurs among people living on the land.

Some are related to administrative actions. As an example, in previous years the Industrial Division of the Department of Northern Affairs provided a barge to take people to the whaling camp at Kendall Island, but in the summer of 1965 this was not done. Although in the past most of the people taken to the camp were women and children, they all perform important functions according to the division of labour in a whaling camp. The women process whales and cook for the men, the children keep up stocks of firewood and water and feed the dogs, and young men not engaged in whaling provide fish and fowl to vary the diet.

Another aspect relates to the linkage of trapping and hunting activities. Since people on the land use trade staples, they may well "fee the pinch" for such foods and other store products if their trapping yield is low. Furthermore, trapping success also affects success in hunting. If a man's trapping return is low, he may not be able to get the gasoline, ammunition, nets, and boat maintenance supplies needed to continue efficient hunting. Although Jenness (1964: 103) considers an efficient trapping regime utterly incompatible with an efficient hunting and fishing existence, I must observe that for today's Mackenzie Delta people, efficient trapping is normally essential to efficient hunting.

But of all the uncertainties they face, the major source of difficulty for these people is of course the instability of the fur market; over this vital factor they have little control. Although Black (1961:85) shows that there is a trend towards reduced harvesting of fur resources in the Mackenzie Delta, I think this may not be as true of the people on the land as for some settlement-based trappers. However, it should also be noted here that Black also shows convincingly that "local harvesting methods give rise to low-quality furs and attendant low prices---" (ibid.) and that group area trapping has reduced the incentive of individual trappers to maintain the localities of their traplines.

Another major factor in the domestic economy of the people on the land is the "debt system". To be able to devote full time to trapping in the spring, one needs assurance of a ready food supply. Some fish and meat laid away in the autumn is used, but a large part of the diet in the spring is based on store staples (flour, sugar, tea, tinned meats, and dried soups for humans and large quantities of rolled oats or dog meal to fill out the "dog pot" for the dog team). These supplies



are usually given on credit by the traders, along with such necessities as rifles, traps, tents, ammunition and gasoline. Without these a trapper could not operate. To overcome long-standing debts the traders charge as much as 30% more than would the Hudson's Bay Company, which no longer grub-stakes trappers. When the trapping season ends, the trapper brings his furs to the trader to put on account. If any cash is left over (which is not always the case) the trapper will buy the things he needs to hunt and fish for the rest of the year. Some may be squandered. The trapper is indissolubly bound to the trader in this system, and is seldom, if ever, out of debt. Cash loans are sometimes given by the traders and these are put on account. After the 1965 trapping season one man of my acquaintance was \$100 in debt to a trader. He was paid \$40 for a short casual job in July which he gave to the trader. However, at the time of repayment the trader pointed out a pair of "white man's" shoes to my friend saying that they were a "deal". The trapper took the shoes after finding that they were a good fit, without as much as asking the price. He also bought a primus stove from the trader (without asking the price), and one hour after being paid he was \$105 dollars in debt to the trader.

People of the land act in various ways which would be considered improvident by middle-class standards. The most obvious of these is gambling. Toward the end of the ratting season there are many gambling games on the Delta. A number of people will gather at a trapping camp to play various games of cards, mostly variations on poker, with muskrat pelts being used for betting. When a player runs out of pelts to gamble, ammunition, food, gasoline and even canoes, outboard motors, and tents are placed as bets. The games are played to "bust": i.e., a man stays in until he has lost all he has to gamble. The structure of the game is more chance than skill,

so that there is little opportunity of manipulating the odds to minimize losses. From these games some men will come out with two or three thousand pelts; others will come away with nothing. The winners often squander a considerable portion of their winnings after cashing in the pelts --- usually by buying large amounts of beer and food for a period of revelry.

Heavy drinking may be observed among some of the people on the land, especially just after cashing in the year's supply of pelts. There are often "blind drunks" one or two weeks long, during which one will buy many beers for friends. I know of three cases in which trappers were robbed of substantial amounts of money during post-trapping sprees in the spring of 1965. The cases were not reported to the police for fear of detection of immoderate drinking.

#### The Response of Settlement-Dwellers not in Continuous Employment

The bulk of goal frustration, however, does not belong to the people of the land, but to the group of people who live in the settlement and by choice or necessity depend on products of the land. This group is open to the same environmental fluctuations, risks in trapping, and debt system as the people of the land, but their situation is even more precarious. People on the land are more able to pack up and move to the wild resources. The settlement-dwellers are not so able to do this, and their resource utilization pattern tends more to be transhumant (movement between specific places at specific times year after year) than the more flexible semi-nomadism of people on the land.

In the group of settlement-dwellers not in steady employment there has been a fundamental change in family structure and organization for production. The family tends to be a nuclear family in a single-family dwelling. The economy of the unit depends almost entirely on the productive capacities

of the husband/father. If he becomes ill or disabled, the family is unable to get the things that they need or want. This increases the precarious aspect of their adjustment. In consequence, they have a greater need for cash income than the people on the land.

Many of them depend on welfare cheques as a supplement to their domestic economy. Though most people use these wisely to obtain staple foods, some are inclined to buy unnecessary luxury foods (cabbage, lettuce, fresh tomatoes, and fruit). These are useful, nutritious foods, but their considerable expense is incompatible with the funds available.

Among this group adoption of children in the "native" style appears to remain a common feature. If a family finds that it cannot support all of its children it may give a child in adoption to another family. Of course this is not the only factor in adoption; it is an important social feature for other reasons.

Since members of this group depend somewhat less on wild food and more on store products, and since some of them get no more cash per year than people on the land, the quality of the diet in some cases is very poor. Bannock and tea form its basis, with fish and meat when available. Some casual employees' families have a solid meal only every second day with "tea days" (days with only tea and sugar and little or no food) in between. It is among these people that I have observed what I (with unskilled eye) would call malnutrition. When I was visiting a family in this group I was invited to stay for dinner. For the husband and wife and eight children, myself, my guide, and a friend of the family, dinner consisted of two packets of a Kraft Dinner fortified with a small tin of meatballs; bannock and tea rounded out the meal. On this meal, the first outside of tea that day, the husband had to put in a full day's work labouring.



Flour soup, a warm paste of flour and water strengthened with a little seal oil and a few ounces of shredded left-over meat, is a common meal. Consultations with physicians at the Inuvik General Hospital confirmed by impressions of deficient nutrition in this segment of Delta society. Although no epidemiological statistics are available, it would seem that this is the group showing most malnutrition, metabolic disorders, and nutrition-linked diseases. Some of these diseases reflect poor sanitation and neglect, as well as malnutrition.

The social effect of these diseases is marked. I was told that a certain person was "bone-lazy" and that no one would hire him. When I had occasion to visit him and watch him in his surroundings I noted with some shock that he was starving. He was in a vicious circle. No one would hire him because he was lethargic and "lazy". Further, he could not go out on the Delta to hunt because in his whole-hearted commitment to settlement living and aspiration to a "white" way of life, he had disposed of his tent, guns, etc. For himself, his wife and eight children it was reported that he receives welfare in the amount of about \$65 per month and family allowance payments of about \$50 per month. This is hardly an adequate amount to sustain ten people entirely on store goods.

Gambling is very common among casual wage-earners. In Inuvik a card game began in the second week of June 1965, and was reported to have been lasted almost continuously, day and night, until the end of August. It began when trappers returned from the Delta with their furs and continued through the whole summer on the basis of cheques received for casual labour. People entered the game with cash or furs as bets and would not leave until they had lost all or won all. To my knowledge two players lost their jobs because they chose to continue gambling rather than go to work.

Clairmont (1963) has shown that it is basically the settlement-dwellers without continuous employment who are the prominent liquor ordinance offenders. This is the group aspiring to a "white" way of life, but with limited means to achieve it. My observations confirm Clairmont's entirely.

In Aklavik, I noted five families who bought flour, rice, raisins and staple foods, to make "brew", with the addition of water, sugar, and yeast. These people became drunk on the brew for several days. Meanwhile, proper meals were not prepared, and children were neglected. These people are known to officials and employers, who are reluctant to employ them; hence in the competition for scarce casual jobs, they usually lose.

In Inuvik, settlement dwellers can get beer in the Mackenzie Hotel both in the bar and in the beer parlour, as well as at the Territorial Liquor Store. Most who drink, in fact, habituate the beer parlour where a bottle of beer is ten cents cheaper than in the bar. The bar is used mostly by whites and by relatively affluent and aspiring native persons. Even if a person has no money at times, he can go to the beer parlour and get drunk. His friends who have some cash at the moment will supply him with beer, occasionally for as long as a few weeks. When he does have some money and his friends do not, the role will be reversed. This is a self-perpetuating system compatible with the egalitarian ethic of the group.

For some persons, this ethic causes hardships in other ways. Since the group still has wide friendship and kinship ties with people on the land, its members sometimes called upon to help people in that category who are in need. A specific example illustrates this. A man and his family were doing well in settlement living. Two families of relatives came to town to "visit him for a few days". In fact they stayed with him for a few weeks, during which time he was bound to supply them with food and liquor. He was immediately living beyond his means and was shortly in financial trouble.

To illustrate further, a person reported that he had a short term job on the DEW Line. When he returned to town he intended, as he said, to do a few days' "serious drinking". When he had cashed his cheque someone saw him with the money. He then came to me and asked me to keep \$150 for him "because some guys saw me with it and they will make me spend it if they think I've still got it".

This ethic is incompatible with individual achievement in the material sense, which is the only ethic compatible with aspirations to a contemporary way of life. As much as the egalitarian ethic places demands on people on the land and on settlement-dwellers without continuous employment, it also allows people to create a demand on others in times of need. For this reason, amongst others, it appears to be difficult for an individual to break out of the system and commit himself to a purely individual achievement, "I-produce-so-I-consume", ethic.

#### The Response of Continuously Employed Settlement-Dwellers

Settlement-dwellers in continuous employment are those who have been best able to adjust to the change. They have aspired to the modern Canadian way of life, and to a great extent, have succeeded in achieving it. They work together with white persons and have come to internalize their values. Having committed themselves to a way of life they have learned about in school, at the cinema, in books, papers, and magazines, and in contact with southern Canadian in various jobs, they have grasped opportunities and initiated a sequence of decisions compatible with achievement. In making their decisions they have been able to deny immediate gratifications and overcome incidental demands in the course of their move towards their particular goals (e.g. to have an electric stove or refrigerator) and general goals (e.g. to be like people whom they consider successful).

People of this group have some demands made on them by



friends and relatives who have been less "successful", but through a combination of mild affluence and care in manipulation of resources, they have minimized the cost and risk to themselves. Sometimes their kin refer to them as "stingy" and "mean". Many are religious and, in some ways, the most successful of all have been the members of the InnuIt Housing Co-operative, who are almost entirely Eskimo and Pentecostal. The permanently employed settlement-dwellers are, as far as I observed, very light drinkers, if they drink at all, since most are Pentecostals. In pursuit of their aspirations, they have learned to save and budget, to some extent at least. The following examples will show how this is true, but will also show where the planning miscarries.

The InnuIt Housing Co-operative in Inuvik resulted from the aspirations of some of the group to have modern-styled homes. Since they were in steady employment, they had the basic means to achieve this goal and have effectively accomplished it with a twenty-year repayment plan organized through the co-operative. Due, apparently, to lack of skilled advice, it appears doubtful if some of these houses will last out the twenty-year period. If the houses do not last, the lack of skilled advice may leave people without housing and in debt.

In the winter of 1964-65, the same co-operative decided that they would overcome the high cost of food in Inuvik. To do this they sent large orders for staple foods (flour, tea, sugar, jam, cereals, etc.) to a wholesale firm "outside". The shipment was paid in a lump sum for which the co-operative members had been careful to save. When it arrived by barge in late August, some people immediately ate a large part of the year's supply of some items. The houses have no storage space for bulk foods, and it was reported that children running rough-shod over the piles of food destroyed a considerable amount.

Notwithstanding these examples, it is not an accident that the members of the Inuvik InnuIt Housing Co-operative with their "hard-work-and-no-nonsense" attitudes represent a high

point in adaptation amongst the Delta people. Furthermore, their unity as a group has helped them to attain what as individuals they probably could not have attained, but still would have aspired to. These findings generally agree with those of Chance (1960: 1041) for the Eskimos of Kaktovik in Alaska.

## 2. Adjustment to Jobs

Goal frustration can also be seen in the job situation in the Mackenzie Delta. One class of problems arises from the difficulties of job adjustment which many settlement dwellers who have job experience. Several people told me they found jobs boring and resented being constrained to do the same work constantly without change; they could not take a day or two off to go hunting if they wished. Others complained about having to be punctual in their arrival at work in the morning; they felt their time was not their own. Still others considered their jobs to be only one of the many ways of achieving an end, so that if for some reason a man didn't like a job, he would resign and be content to wait for one he felt he would like. Usually such people do not really like working at any job at all. For them, a job is exploited for the cash it can yield; however, if other aspects of it are insufficiently gratifying, it may be rejected and an attempt is made to get a substitute.

As an example of this, I note what I observed in the summer of 1965. Members of the Inuvik brush cutting crew were restless because they had been asked to place an extra pad of gravel under a building. This involved carrying buckets of gravel on all fours through a narrow crawl-space under the building. It was only through great effort on the part of the Eskimo foreman that many of the crew were persuaded to stay on the job. He complained bitterly to me of the situation. The men were equally bitter in their protestations against the nature of the job, which did not measure up to what they felt a job should be. The protestations were probably not against the hard work, but against the ignominy of the task which challenged their prestige as skilled brush-cutters.

The dull routine duties attached to nearly all jobs are resented and employees ordinarily require gratification beyond cash from their jobs. Such gratification concerns self-image and prestige, which they are prepared to defend at the cost of risking material ends which could potentially bring greater prestige at some future time.

A second class of problems arises in the differing responses to jobs between the two categories of settlement dwellers. To understand this situation more fully, I attempted to ascertain the series of decisions and events in their past lives. This proved difficult, but data gained in this way can bring a certain understanding to the situation of the two groups of settlement-dwellers.

The group of settlement-dwellers with a dependence on both the land and casual wages - our casual wage-earners - is drawn, for the most part, from people born into the settlement milieu. A large proportion are descendants of the settlement dwellers of the fur-trade era. However, this group is continuously gaining new members from among the people of the land, especially from among those who have been exposed to settlement life for more or less long periods of time during their schooling. In projecting the future it should be noted that children of people on the land are tending to become settlement-dwellers. Steady wage-earners, on the other hand, are drawn mostly from descendants of settlement-dwellers or from people who had committed themselves to settlement living some considerable time ago. Very rarely has a member of this group just recently moved off the land.

The basic difference between the categories of steady and casual wage-earners is also rooted in part in differences in opportunity. Steady wage-earners have in the past been presented with an opportunity for a steady job, which they have taken and held. They aspired to modern Canadian material and social ends, and when means became available they took it. Most of



these people depend to a great extent upon their jobs as direct prestige mediators and see them as a direct channel to aspired ends; the steady cash income allows them to manipulate the milieu in a relatively wide manner. Moreover, they are not bound to the traders, and do not even feel a compulsion to trade with the local Hudson's Bay stores. The range of commodities they demand is wide and corresponds to the values they have internalized; they make a conscious attempt to be like the whites. In attempting to achieve this goal they are willing to make momentary sacrifices of gratification which might draw away resources applicable to that end. In situations where they have been unable to achieve their ends by individual action, they have initiated corporate action (e.g. the Innuit Housing Co-operative). This is a risk-spreading mechanism allowing more effective achievement and the assurances of satisfaction to individual members which they probably could not achieve by individual action.

Employers have a specific interest in these employees, who are hired on the basis of specific training, abilities, and personal qualities. The interests of employer and employee in each other are specific and generally mutually compatible; specific tasks are demanded, and perquisites are given in proportion.

Thus we have a group which appears to find their aspirations largely fulfilled. They are those people who value settlement living, are presented with an opportunity for steady work, and are prepared to make the necessary adjustments to the work situation. The steady job is more compatible with achievement of aspirations to the modern way of life. If the individual can adjust quickly to the demands of the situation in terms of his other values, success seems likely.

As has been experienced in other segments of Canadian society (for example, the Winter Works programme of recent years) casual or seasonal labour seems unlikely to yield similar success. This leads to economic frustration among the great number of casual wage-earners who would welcome the opportunity of a steady job. The lack of such an opportunity arises in some

cases because of insufficient educational and training qualifications. Furthermore, it appeared that steady job opportunities are simply not available in the Delta for every person who wants one. The marked seasonality of the northern year requires that some activities be performed at certain times of the year. These jobs are best filled by casual employees, some of whom will return to the same position every year as the activity is required. In the intervening seasons such a person must occupy himself either with other casual jobs or with activity on the land.

Some people who could be holding steady jobs if working conditions were flexible have to be satisfied with casual ones. This sometimes arises through what the employer consider undesirable qualities in the employee; a major one relates to drinking. If an employee chooses to maximize a momentary gratification in drinking with his peers (and drinking in the Mackenzie Delta often involves drinking to excess by middle-class standards) he may fail to turn up for work, or his work efficiency may be reduced. I have been told that some foremen are so sensitive to the alcohol problem that they discharge persons who appear at work with a hangover, or the smell of alcohol on their breath.

On the other hand, there are people among the casual wage-earners who have had opportunity of a steady job. Some of them took potentially steady jobs but found the situation not to their liking. They felt that time was not their own, they were bored with steady routine, or they disliked being indoors week after week. A condition in which they could "be their own bosses" (i.e. hunt for a while, take a short job for the sake of some quick cash, work when and as they liked) was more valued. I suspect that a greater variety of casual jobs throughout the year would be preferred, though some men state an explicit preference for being on the land in the winter.

We can trace this distinction between two types of casual wage-earner farther. All the men seeking casual employment are basically looking for one thing: money. They require this money to manipulate their various means-alternatives to achieve their goals.



For some, the goal is efficient use of the land: this group needs money for staple store foods to supplement wild food, and for ammunition, gasoline, and other equipment. Their primary interest in a job is the money; for this reason they are willing to accept a wide variety of jobs, the main requirement for which is usually a strong back and a dependability for being on time at work. Such dependability usually means that a person cannot have drinking parties during the week. Some told me they were prepared to make this sacrifice; others would not, and sometimes lost their jobs because of it. Several jobs may be open to such a casual wage-earner, and he is willing to accept nearly any one of them. For those approaching a job with this outlook, there seems to be general satisfaction. The job is like a herd of caribou: something to be exploited for what it is worth. For such people, any source of cash - including welfare funds - is suitable. Prestige coming directly from job status is not a major consideration. For these people, prestige comes from two sources: from being a successful hunter and from individual qualities in relation to one's peers; the hunter must have a reasonable amount of cash to buy good equipment to be able to compete since a "good outfit" is a valued thing and a source of prestige in itself. Secondly, prestige is accorded the man who is generous with food and cash. In other words, prestige is not derived from qualities accorded by an outside source.

The second group of casual wage-earners, however, consists of those who have accepted short-term jobs in default of other more permanent ones. We have already mentioned how this relates to the availability of permanent jobs; here we are concerned with the natives' attitudes to the permanent jobs which are available. There are many people who, having internalized middle-class values to a degree, esteem specific jobs not only in terms of the cash return but also in terms of the prestige that a specific job accords them among their peers who consider a steady cash income to be essential. Failure of the job situation to supply this is a major source of dissatisfaction.



An important number of the second group experience what we may call *value confusion*. They actively desire money, prestige, and security from their jobs according to their acculturated values. At the same time, judgements about the satisfactions from their jobs are made by comparing these satisfactions with the values and satisfactions of the fur-trade era, where they felt they had money, prestige, relative security, and much-valued independence. As much as they value a "white" job, they idealize an independent, relatively prosperous fur-trapping existence of the past. Since their present jobs often do not accord them satisfactions comparable with the fur-trade era, they quickly become dissatisfied and look for others which they hope will help them to realize their aspirations. In sum, their goals are ill-defined or inconsistent, and they recognize few suitable means-alternatives compatible with achieving their goals. This is probably a major source of job instability.

Although the second of these groups of casual wage-earners is looking for somewhat more in their jobs than the first, they are treated in the same way by the employer. For the first type of casual wage-earner we have been considering, termination of a job only represents an end to a source of money income. He will seek some other job or money income alternative. For the second type, however, termination of a job means termination of a specific prestige-providing device as well. Naturally his job is not the only source of prestige, but he gives it more value than members of the other group.

Other problems related to jobs should be mentioned. It is my impression from conversations with casual wage-earners that they desire to work within the Delta community. Some told me, "This is my place. I don't want to go out of it". This is related to two things: a) a desire to stay within the social group which they know best, and with whom they have wide exchange and dependency relations; b) a desire to remain within the territory they know best, because of their partial dependency on its land resources. Among the steady wage-earners, however,

I noted more willingness to venture outside the Delta. One such man of my acquaintance visited Yellowknife in the summer of 1965 and was so impressed with what his money could buy there in comparison with Inuvik that he was giving serious consideration to moving to Yellowknife.

I mention one last aspect which is apparent to anyone familiar with the North. Most of the jobs open to Delta people are service jobs: cleaning, brush cutting, duty labour. There is a danger of producing a group of service personnel in a situation similar to that of some groups of Negroes in the southern United States, but a satisfactory answer has yet to be found to this problem.

### 3. Educational Opportunities

A third general aspect of the social milieu which affects all the groups we have considered is education. If the people aspire to a middle-class way of life, they must be educated in its norms and values. But this situation is not without strain. Sons and daughters of people on the land find it difficult to become "educated" and still to learn the special techniques of living on the land. Some reject education for a life on the land, while others are in the position of neither having mastered living on the land nor having sufficient schooling to allow them to live very successfully in the settlement. Such people make up a high proportion of the category of casual wage-earners. Some of them might be capable of holding steady jobs, but, in competition, they lose because they do not have enough education to meet the stated education requirements.

The administration has noted this situation fully and has initiated various training programmes; however, in the past these programmes have often had very short-term objectives and the trainees have had limited background education. Of necessity, the training is so specialized that they are often unable to generalize it to job situations other than those for which they

have been expressly drilled. Besides often seeming unable to generalize their training, some of these trainees have told me they would not accept or be content with a job other than the specific one for which the training has prepared them. They are inclined to see the training as a very specific means of achieving their aspirations. Often, after completing a training course, a man is unable to find a job specifically in his line of training; frustration and resentment result.

One informant suggested to me that there was a lack of coherence between the activities of the government agency responsible for education and its sister agency responsible for industrial development in the area. Though the above opinion of the situation may be exaggerated, several people have implied to me that they were bewildered by the many voices of government.

The situation of trainees in the Mackenzie Delta is a vexing problem. Clairmont (1963: 25) observes that of 39 Delta people who had received training up to 1961, only three were still in steady employment. I spoke to several of these trainees and to some of the people who had helped to train them and would account for the problem in the following manner. Most of the trainees were drawn from the category of casual-earners by government agents assessing persons by their potential abilities and personal qualities. The trainees on the other hand saw in the training just one more means of earning the cash they required to carry on the independent way of life they desired (a life, as we have noted, marked by idealized fur-trade era values in many cases). The attitudes of the trainee and the administration were incompatible with each other, since the trainee and his peers have a relatively egalitarian ethic and the ethic compatible with employers' expectations is one of individual achievement. The trainees found it difficult to see their post-training jobs as a primary source of prestige. Other steady wage-earners were able to "make the leap" by having internalized an individual achievement



ethic before taking their jobs, and then by using their jobs as means consonant with their valued aspirations. This is especially apparent among Alaskan Eskimos who have immigrated recently and were rather highly acculturated before coming to the delta. There is evidence that some of the Metis may be considered similar in this respect to the Alaskan Eskimos.

For the wage-earner, the according of prestige in the occupational hierarchy is an important motivation for continuing in the occupational system. For many trainees, in the group noted above, this is largely irrelevant, for the primary source of prestige lies elsewhere. The problem in the Mackenzie Delta can be seen as one of assuring relevant opportunities considered legitimate by the persons expected to take them. There are opportunities in the Delta, but they may be the wrong ones from the point of view of the native person. Conditions of this sort seem to be constantly associated with rapid social change. Parsons (1949: 314), in discussing such situations, has suggested that for constructive change to take place, it is necessary among other things to provide realistic opportunities which can be utilized to satisfy the interests of groups. He further states that it is above all important...

to provide new alternative, definitions of the situation which give the new realistic opportunities positive meaning. It is particularly important that these should not be too far removed from the symbols and prestige standards previously current.

It is my opinion that the provision of new alternative definitions with positive meaning in the Mackenzie Delta will lie in carefully planned long-term education and in informal acculturation in values, and not in short-term special training. In other words, it must be assured that persons who enter training programmes share values and expectations consistent with those of the training programme planners and the occupational subsystem into which the trainee will move after his training. Training is the means of adapting persons, otherwise provided with a basic education, to particular socio-economic niches consonant with the needs and demands of the society and its economy.

## POSSIBLE FUTURE TRENDS

### The Movement From The Land

In the Mackenzie Delta, there is a trend towards reduced utilization of products of the land. Socially, this means a movement away from the land and into the settlements. In the settlements, class structure related in part to differences of cash income as well as to the nature of that income appears to be developing.

Children of people on the land show a tendency to down-grade bush life. I was made well aware of this during the summer, as a number of them complained to me of the loneliness and boredom of camp life. They attempted to visit the settlements as frequently as possible and several expressed a desire to live in town and have jobs. On the other hand, their parents were often critical of their lack of desire to live on it. I witnessed two fights between fathers and sons on these matters during the summer. Hobart (1965) relates this to the "vertiginous" rate of acculturation experienced by children in school. The matter, however, is not solely one of formal education and schooling; there are many other channels through which new values are obtained. Reading is a very common pastime in camp, though the literature (almost invariably) comic books and cheap crime magazines) is of doubtful value. Friends of young bush people live in the settlements and the power of the cinema as well as the periodic dances in Aklavik and Inuvik should not be underrated as opportunities to learn values and ideas from a wide range of sources. It is from such informal sources that changes in values come. They all combine to change the young people on the land, and it is my impression that they would as soon have no dependence on it at all if it could be avoided.

### The Development of a Class System

Dunning (1959) and others have noted the development

of a "caste-like" or strong class distinction between whites and native people in Canada's northland. Such a distinction can be seen in the Mackenzie Delta, especially in Inuvik. The information of such a class structure is undoubtedly related to the role of "white marginal men" (ibid.), but that is not all the answer. When we speak of class we refer to differences in values, morals, and ways of doing things among the native Delta people. In this sense, there are the beginnings of a class system among themselves. A distinction between settlement-dwellers with steady jobs and those with only casual employment has been made in this report, and we have noted some expression of social distance between them.

In a real sense the difference between them is related to differential power based on the different cash incomes of the two groups. Hughes (1965: 49) has emphasized the "power of money", and between the two, there is a real difference of "power" in this sense. Steady wage-earners are capable of manipulating aspects of the environment in a significant way unavailable to the casual earners. For example, as we noted earlier, some of them have effectively reduced their cost of living by buying bulk amounts of staple foods from wholesale concerns outside the Delta. The casual wage-earner is unable to do this and, in fact, is quite likely to be shackled to the debt system in order to overcome the seasonality of his cash (and produce) income. But the possession of money by itself is not the clue to this power, which depends rather on the way that the money is manipulated. Manipulation in turn depends on values, goals, to which money may be directed, ethics, and even aesthetics. We have noted that casual wage-earners are more likely to consider money as something to spend, while the steady wage-earners tend to think of it rather as something to control in the achievement of ends.

These beginnings of a class system hold vital seeds of the future Mackenzie Delta Community. Already the casual wage-earners stand at a depth of two generations in the sense that people within this group have children now in the process of making decisions which will allow them to continue in the ways of their parents. They are internalizing values, ethics, standards of good, bad, and worthwhileness which will guide their lives to a great extent.



Not all casual wage-earners are determined to become steady wage-earners. Some seem to have struck a certain balance (albeit a precarious one at times) between a dependency on the land and on cash. Some certainly expressed to me discontent with their lot, but others would appear to consider their way of life reasonably amenable. This situation may be partially comparable to the Eskimos of Frobisher Bay who expressed a general satisfaction with the town life (Honigmann 1965: 60).

#### Future Social Trends

Murphy and Hughes (see Hughes 1965), and Chance (1960) have demonstrated a correlation between psychopathology and disparity between aspiration and realization. Chance's group corresponds in many ways to the casual wage-earners of Mackenzie Delta settlements as here defined. The question arises whether it can be expected that the Mackenzie Delta group will continue to show such disorders. This is obviously of interest to the administrator but it is difficult to answer. Probably the incidence of such disorders will decrease if the casual earners gradually emerge as a stable class. Clairmont (1963) relates deviance to similar situations. Deviance as he defines it may also decrease. However, not even a moderately reliable prediction can be made without further study.

The tendency to devalue use of land products in the Delta is a serious one, but it is possible that a revitalization of use of Delta resources could be fostered. The Delta people cannot return to the land in the ways of their fore-fathers. However, they *could* utilize resources of the Delta in a new way compatible with the changed social milieu. As a single example, a major problem in the Delta is transport. Several "schooners" and large boats of the fur-trade era are now beached and useless with their owners leading a settlement existence of some sort although some expressed a desire to me to go out on the Delta to fish and hunt with craft larger than canoes. For the Eskimo

this could be arranged through the purchase of a suitable boat from the Inuvik boat-building shop at a cost of about \$500 to \$600 financed through the Eskimo Loan Fund. Very few Eskimos know of this excellent plan. In the Eastern Arctic it is reported that some 100 boats so financed are in use, but to my knowledge there are only three such boats in the Mackenzie Delta and not one belongs to an Eskimo. One man of my acquaintance, who would sincerely like to have one of these boats, applied for one, but was turned down as a "poor risk". This is probably entirely correct in terms of the plan since his present source of income (and livelihood) is a monthly welfare cheque of \$65 and a monthly family allowance cheque of about \$50. This is used to feed and cloth ten people. He does not have a canoe to get fish to vary his family's diet of flour, lard and tea although he is sometimes able to borrow one. The capital investment of \$600 in this man could mean that the money went to work, and not only for food. If he were conscientious in using the boat, he might be able to trap sufficiently to keep himself going. I do not suggest a general return to the land, but if those few families who are willing to return were given the means to do so, I am sure their stress would be reduced.

## - VIII -

FURTHER RESEARCH

It need hardly be emphasized that this is a preliminary study. Nevertheless it is apparent that several issues important to administration and social science need to be investigated.

I have suggested that there is a *Mackenzie Delta community* defined by a particular set of social relations between the people within it. Because I have found evidence of negative sentiment between the members of certain settlements within the geographic area of the Delta, the significance and relevance of the concept of a Delta community should be clarified. It would be useful to know whether these sentiments are strong enough to disrupt potential collaboration of these settlements in decision-making processes over affairs involving their common good, since group decision-making can often effectively achieve the goals of its members when they are unable to achieve them individually. It may be found that the negative sentiment is simply "strong talk" and that any differences that may be felt are over-ridden when important issues are at stake. Among other reasons, an understanding of this issue is important to questions of self-government.

Similarly, a careful and accurate examination of inter-ethnic relations must now be made. The present study indicates that ethnic differences within the native population are of small importance in the economic sphere. Other workers in the area have found ethnic relations to be strained in other social spheres. We must know in detail if and how ethnic differences influence group political and economic decision-making.

A most important feature of continuing research should be a thorough documentation of the conceptions that natives have of the "white" community and vice versa, since interaction is based



upon these conceptions. The presence and actions of the white community in the Delta provide many of the most significant restraints on action by the native person, and also provide some of the most significant alternatives of positive action for the native person. The main questions here are:

- (1) Upon what conceptions or expectations of the native person does the white community set active restraint on the possible action-alternatives of the native person?
- (2) Does the native recognize these restraints, and does he accept them or find them harrassing?
- (3) Does the native recognize the alternatives of positive action provided for him by the white community? If he recognizes them, does he consider these alternatives relevant to him? For example, does the native person know the specific official channels through which he may register complaints or requests for social or economic assistance? Does he conceive of administration as a great brooding incubus of potential threat, or as an important means of achieving his aspirations which are consonant with Canadian policy? In other words, what are the channels of communications in the Delta? Do these channels work efficiently and what kinds of communication flow?

It would also be important to have a demographic analysis of the Mackenzie Delta. This should take the form of an anthropological census: major categories and trends in the Delta population as a whole should be considered, but major attention must be given to the composition of households.

The definition of the three main classes in the Mackenzie Delta indicated in the present study must be refined and a record kept of the specific persons we may allocate to these classes. This is important since Vallee (1962) found similarly defined classes in Central Keewatin and Rohner (1964) has found three virtually identical classes among the modern Kwakiutl Indians of British Columbia. These three ethnic groups have had different social backgrounds, and perhaps the presence of similar classes in them is the result of a similar experience with Canadian

administration and society rather than of their histories preceding the period of Canadian administration.

We also need further information on the structure of family groups within the Delta classes as a basis for social and economic legislation and guidance. It is important to know how the members of a family in any given class initiate action influencing the economic and social relations of the family in helping to achieve what they aspire to as "the good life".

The above-mentioned issues largely concern the structural features of Delta society. These should not be our sole concern; the *reality* of social life lies in values, sentiments, and feelings which act as a basis for action. Concomitant with a carefully prepared structural analysis, we require a study of the values and aspirations of the persons forming that structure and making it operate.

Our major research concern is the understanding of the Mackenzie Delta person's view of the "good life" whether he thinks he is achieving it, and what action he initiates if he feels he is not getting it. Our attempt must be to make an analysis, useful to both administration and social science, which although basically formal is clothed with the flesh and blood reality of the native person and his society.

REFERENCES

- Belshaw, C.S.  
1959 The Identification of Values in Anthropology.  
American Journal of Sociology, 45; 555  
(May 1959).
- Black, W.A.  
1961 Fur Trapping in the Mackenzie Delta.  
Geog. Bull., 16: 62.
- Chance, N.A.  
1960 Culture Change and Eskimo Integration:  
An Eskimo Example. American Anthropologist,  
62: 1028 (Dec. 1960).
- 1963 Notes on Culture Change and Personality  
Adjustments among the North Alaskan  
Eskimos. Arctic, 16, 264.
- Chang, Kwang-Chi  
1962 A Typology of Settlement and Community  
Patterns in some Circumpolar Societies.  
Arctic Anthropology, 1: 28.
- Clairmont, D.H.J.  
1963 Deviance among Indians and Eskimos in  
Aklavik, N.W.T. Ottawa: Northern  
Co-ordination and Research Centre,  
Department of Indian Affairs and Northern  
Development, report NCRC 63-9.
- Cooper, P.F. Jr.  
1967 The Mackenzie Delta: Technology. Ottawa  
Department of Indian Affairs and Northern  
Development, Northern Co-ordination and  
Research Centre, MDRP-2.
- Dunning, R.W.  
1959 Ethnic Relations and the Marginal Man  
in Canada. Human Organization, 18,  
No. 3: 117.
- 1965 Comment on C.C. Hughes' "Under Four Flags:  
Recent Culture Change among the Eskimos".  
Current Anthropology, 6, 59 (Feb. 1965).



Evans-Pritchard, E.E.

- 1963      Anthropology and History. in: Essays  
in Social Anthropology.    New York:  
Free Press of Glencoe, Inc., 1963.

Hobart, C.W.

- 1963      Eskimo Education in Residential Schools  
in the Mackenzie District: A Descriptive  
and Comparative Report.    Unpublished  
manuscript in the library of the Northern  
Co-ordination and Research Centre,  
Department of Indian Affairs and Northern  
Development, Ottawa.

Honigmann, J.J.

- 1965      Comment on C.C. Hughes "Under Four Flags:  
Recent Culture Change among the Eskimos"  
Current Anthropology, 6: 60 (Feb. 1965)

Hughes, C.D.

- 1965      Under Four Flags:    Recent Culture Change  
among the Eskimos.    Current Anthropology.  
6: 3 (Feb. 1965).

Jenness, D.

- 1958      Indians of Canada.    Canada:    National  
Museum, Bull. 65 (Anthropological Series  
No. 15) Fourth Edition.

- 1964      Eskimo Administration: II.    Canada.  
Montreal:    Arctic Institute of North  
America, Technical Paper 14.

Kluckhohn, C.K.M.

- 1956      Toward a Comparison of Value-Emphases in  
Different Cultures.    in: White, L.D., ed.,  
The State of the Social Sciences.    Chicago:  
University of Chicago Press.

Ladd, John

- 1957      The Structure of a Moral Code.    Cambridge:  
Harvard University Press.

Mackay, J.R.

- 1963      The Mackenzie Delta Area, N.W.T. Ottawa:  
Department of Energy, Mines and Resources,  
Geographical Branch, Memoir 8.

Mooney, J.

- 1928      Aboriginal Population of America.  
Misc. Coll. 80, No. 7 (Washington, D.C.)

- Nadel, S.F.  
1951 The Foundations of Social Anthropology.  
London: Cohen and West, 1951.
- Osgood, C.  
1932 Ethnography of the Bear Lake Indians.  
Ottawa Museum of Canada, Bull. 70,  
pp. 31.
- Parsons, T.  
1949 The Problem of Controlled Institutional  
Change. In: Essays in Sociological  
Theory Pure and Applied. Glencoe:  
The Free Press.
- 1951 The Social System. New York: Free Press.
- Parsons, T., R. Bales,  
and E.A. Shils  
1953 Working Papers in the Theory of Action.  
Glencoe: The Free Press, 1953.
- Parsons, T. and  
E.A. Shils  
1951 Toward a General Theory of Action.  
Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Parsons, T. and  
N.J. Smelser  
1965 Economy and Society. New York: Free Press.
- Rohner, D.P.  
1964 Ethnography of a Contemporary Kwakiutl  
Village: Gilford Island Band. Unpublished  
diss., Stanford Jr. University, Standord,  
Calif.
- Rousseliere, Fr. G.M.  
1964 Alcoholism - Public Enemy Number One of the  
Eskimo. Eskimo, 68: 3.
- Schaeffer, O.  
1964 A Doctor Speaks on Alcoholism in the North.  
Eskimo, 68: 6.
- Suttles, W.  
1963 The Persistence of Intervillage Ties among  
the Coast Salish. Ethnology, 2: 512.
- Vallee, F.G.  
1962 Kabloona and Eskimos in the Central Keewatin,  
Ottawa: Northern Co-ordination and Research  
Centre, Dept. of Northern Affairs and National  
Resources, Report NCRC 62-2.







